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TAGS: [MASS](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [SR](#)  
SUBJECT: BELGRADE - REQUEST FOR IMET FUNDING

THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST, SEE PARA 1.

¶1. (SBU) In the wake of the President's decision to waive ASPA conditionality from IMET eligibility for a number of countries, including Serbia, Embassy requests IMET funding in the amount of \$500,000 for the current fiscal year. Such funding would support resident courses, Distinguished Orientation Visits (DIVOT), Mobile Education Teams (METs), and English language training materials.

¶2. (SBU) IMET funding for Serbia would be an important additional element in our bilateral security cooperation strategy. Explicit and tangible U.S. assistance of this type to a key symbol for Serbia, its military, would bolster beleaguered reformists inside and outside the military.

¶3. (SBU) On a technical level, IMET programs would fill a critical need in the Serbian armed forces. In order to prepare for eventual PfP membership, regional cooperation, and (ultimately) interoperability with NATO allied forces in peacekeeping and other missions, Serbia will have to overcome a staggering deficit of English-speaking officers and enlisted personnel. The sooner IMET programs start, the faster that gap can close.

¶4. (SBU) IMET will also bring ancillary benefits of exposing more Serbian military to western military practice and policy, and help Serbian mid-rank officers develop contacts with western military counterparts, which will in turn assist in the battle for "hearts and minds" of Serbian military personnel.

¶5. (SBU) We understand ongoing Mladic conditionality could impact moving forward with IMET. Given the benefits to military reform noted above, we believe an exception to Mladic conditionality for this program would be warranted and beneficial. We appreciate Washington's expeditious guidance.

POLT